

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as shown in the following listing of claims. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of manufacturing a thermoset including the steps of:

providing a curable mixture including a base thermoset component, a curing agent and expandable hollow microspheres;

~~adding expandable hollow microspheres to the base thermoset component in the liquid phase; and~~

applying a heat treatment to ~~the a thermoset mixture~~ after the mixture has substantially cured ~~comprising the base thermoset component and the expandable hollow microspheres,~~ wherein the expandable hollow microspheres expand ~~during, or after, a partial or full curing of the thermoset mixture~~ such that a permanent deformation occurs around the microspheres and compressive residual stress is created in the ~~thermoset mixture~~.

2. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the ~~thermoset mixture~~ comprises an epoxy resin and ~~the expandable hollow microspheres are added to the epoxy resin.~~

3. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1 ~~[[2]]~~ wherein said providing includes adding the curing agent to an initial mixture of the base thermoset component and the expandable hollow microspheres ~~further including the step of adding a curing agent to the thermoset mixture.~~

4. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 3 wherein said initial mixture is heated before adding the curing agent ~~is added after said applying heat treatment.~~

5. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1 ~~[[3]]~~ further including the step of pouring ~~wherein the mixture is stirred after adding the curing agent, and poured into a mould for curing.~~

6. (Previously Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the expandable hollow microspheres comprise a co-polymer shell and gas.

7. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 4 ~~[[3]]~~ wherein said heated initial mixture is allowed to cool before adding the curing agent ~~is added before said applying heat treatment.~~